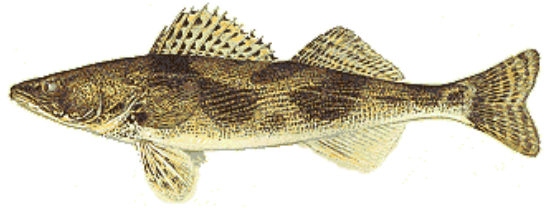


Rivers and Streams

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Walleye and Sauger on the Upper Mississippi River

Fall population surveys of walleye and sauger at Bellevue (Pool 13), Guttenberg (Pool 11) and Davenport (Pool 16) resulted in below average catches when compared to other years since 1992. Poor catches may be the result of the unusual fall flooding which have hampered sampling efforts. Anglers will still benefit from the average or excellent reproduction during 2005, 2008 and 2009. The 2009 walleye year class is the 2nd highest recorded since 1992 at both Bellevue and Guttenberg. Creel surveys on Pool 13 during the 2010 open pool summer fishery (May-October)



reported average to below average catch and harvest of walleye and sauger due to high water levels most of the year. The Dubuque, Bellevue and Clinton tailwaters were closed to fishing from December 1 through March 15 due to a regulation implemented six years ago, aimed at decreasing total annual mortality of sauger from near 80-85% down to a more acceptable level near 50%. Evaluation of this regulation has shown a small decline in mortality rates at Bellevue where the closure was in effect but other population metrics such as size structure, growth and angler catch and harvest rates showed no differences or improvements in the sauger population. Based on this information the closure was removed in Iowa in November 2010 and will be removed in Illinois April 1, 2011. Evaluation of a 15 inch minimum with a 20-27 inch release slot for walleye has shown an increase of walleye in the 20-27 inch range in pools where the regulation is in effect versus pools without the regulation. Seventy percent of the eggs produced by walleye come from fish in the 20-27 inch range. Protecting this size class to increase the number of eggs in the system may improve recruitment in the future. Recommendations include continuing with the slot limit and evaluation of the walleye population as this size class increases. The 2005 catch of young-of-the-year walleye and sauger in the Guttenberg tailwaters was the third highest documented during the 1993-2006



period and should be available to anglers the fall of 2010 as 25 to 26 inch fish. We have seen 6 consecutive years of average reproduction since 2003 which we hope will stabilize the fishery and provide consistent quality fishing instead of the boom and bust fishery that we have been experiencing.